

Big Red Summer Career Development Camps

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Program of Distinction Category:

- Workforce Preparation

Sources of Funding that Support this Program:

Registration Fees

Knowledge and Research Base

Research indicates that visiting college campuses and learning more about specific programs is an important factor in students actually enrolling on that campus (Anderson-Rowland, 1996; Frisbee, Belcher & Sanders, 2000). In addition, according to 2004 U.S. Census data, college graduates earn an average of \$51,568 annually compared to an average of \$28,631 for high school graduates. In order to increase the likelihood of students acquiring a college education and gaining the life skills needed to lead productive lives in the 21st century, University of Nebraska-Lincoln Extension 4-H teams with other colleges across campus to offer Big Red Summer Career Development Camps (also known as Big Red Summer Camps).

During Big Red Summer Camps, students spend a week on the University of Nebraska-Lincoln campus participating in hands-on experiences (Kolb, 1984) based on their specific subject matter interests (i.e., computer science, golf, theatre, movie-making, etc.). Faculty work one-on-one with campers to help them acquire new skills, process those skills and apply what they have learned to decisions related to their future careers. Throughout the camps, students are encouraged to correlate the knowledge they are learning to real-world issues and career opportunities (SCANS, 1990).

Needs Assessment

According to the National Center for Public Policy and Higher Education, Nebraska ranks among the top states in the country on 18-24-year-olds having a high school credential (91% in comparison to the benchmark of 93%). Fifty-one percent of Nebraska's high school graduates enroll in college (in comparison to the benchmark of 54%); however, only 43% actually complete college by the end of five years (as compared to 64% for the benchmark). This lower completion rate could be a result of students entering college not having a good understanding of what college involves and students not selecting a field of study that matches their

interests; hence, there is a need for bringing students to campus to work in classrooms with university faculty to become more familiar with their options.

State 4-H Centennial Conversation findings indicate that young people want a chance to explore subject areas in-depth and to spend time on a college campus with others their age. For example, one young person wrote, "I need a 4-H project that is going to help prepare me for my future job." Another stated, "I want to explore careers." These conversations, conducted in 2002, involved nearly 2,000 youth and adults statewide.

Big Red Summer Camps are helping to meet these needs by allowing young people to select an area of interest and spend time on campus pursuing that field of study. In addition, Big Red Summer Camps help support 4-H's goal of student recruitment.

Goals and Objectives

Based on the needs identified, the goals of Big Red Summer Camps are to:

- Increase participant knowledge of a chosen subject matter.
- Increase participant knowledge of career options in their chosen area.
- Increase participant desire to further their education.
- Raise awareness of offerings available at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln.
- Increase the engagement of the entire land-grant university system with 4-H.

Target Audience

The target audience for Big Red Summer Camps is youth, grades eight through twelve, both 4-H and non-4-H, from throughout Nebraska and beyond. Big Red Summer Camps are promoted in a variety of ways: brochures are mailed to lists provided by each participating department; news releases are distributed; e-mails are sent to past camp attendees; mailings are made to school counselors and teachers; information is distributed by UNL Admissions staff; county extension staff distribute brochures, include articles in newsletters and make contacts with youth they believe might be interested; and national camp websites include Big Red Summer Camps information.

Program Design and Content

Type of program

Overnight Camp

Methods used to deliver the program

Big Red Summer Camps are week-long residential experiences that offer hands-on opportunities in specific career fields. Camp costs range from \$200-\$475 dependent upon subject area; scholarships are available. Costs cover all expenses related to subject matter offerings, overnight stays in college residence halls, and recreational/cultural evening activities. Cultural and evening activities are designed to support the camp content. For example, theatre participants attend plays at the community theatre and other venues, while those in movie making participate in screenings of new films. Other evening activities are designed for group socialization and relaxation (visits to the campus recreation center, laser tag, baseball games, etc.).

Big Red Summer Camp offerings in 2005 included: Web Design, Fashion Design, Culinology, Child Development, Theatre, Movie Making and Golf. Faculty from each academic area provide 25-30 contact hours of hands-on instruction based on curriculum from their area of expertise. Each camp is designed to have a high instructor to student ratio (camps have a maximum of 12-15 participants) to ensure one-on-one contact with the professor and high quality learning experiences.

Each Big Red Summer Camp culminates in a capstone event that allows students, family, friends and other campers to showcase the work done and skills learned throughout the week. For example, theatre students scripted, filmed, and edited movies that were shown at the Mary Riepma Ross Theatre on the UNL campus. Culinology students developed the menu, created the ambience and prepared a five-course luncheon for fifty guests of the camp. The camps and capstone events provide the students with a vision of what a specific major has to offer and the potential career paths that they could follow.

Curricula and/or educational materials

Faculty in each of the targeted academic areas develops their curriculum in partnership with 4-H Youth Development Specialists who are trained in youth and curriculum development. Together, these teams help to ensure that curriculum is research-based, hands-on, learner appropriate and meets learning objectives. Big Red Summer Camp curriculum includes a focus on work readiness skills as identified through the SCANS report (SCANS, 1990) and the Career Clusters identified by the National Association of State Directors of Career Technical Education Consortium. In addition to classroom learning, participants take field trips to job sites, visit with professionals in chosen fields of study, participate in campus tours and learn how their interest area relates to higher education and a potential career. The following table gives examples of the relationship among camp topics, life skills as identified by the SCANS report (listed in camp column), college majors and career opportunities:

Table 1: Relationship Among Camp Topics, Life Skills, College Majors, and Careers

Camp Topic	Major(s)	Career Opportunities
Web Design <u>Life Skills</u> -Listening -Speaking -Problem Solving -Creative thinking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Computer Science •Engineering and Technology •Journalism and Mass Communications 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scientific, systems, and programming (database design, network software design) • High-speed processor specialists • Electronic commerce specialists, • Enterprise-scale software systems • Technical Management of Telecommunications Networks • Telecommunications Engineering Design • Telecommunications Network Performance Analysis • Optical Communications • Teaching

Camp Topic	Major(s)	Career Opportunities
Fashion Design <u>Life Skills</u> -Listening -Speaking -Creative Thinking -Sociability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Textile Science •Family and Consumer Sciences •Textiles, Clothing and Design 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fashion Journalism • Graphic Design • Product Development • Training Specialist • Quality Assurance • Technical Sales
Culinology <u>Life Skills</u> -Listening -Speaking -Reasoning -Problem Solving	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Food Science and Technology •Dietetics •Nutrition •Restaurant/Foodservice Administration 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Food Chemistry • Food Microbiology • Product Development • Food Safety Inspection • Food product sales and marketing • Diabetes Education • WIC Nutrition • Consumer Education
Child Development <u>Life Skills</u> -Listening -Speaking -Responsibility -Reasoning -Decision Making	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Education and Human Sciences •Child Development/Early Childhood Education 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preschools • Head Start Programs • Child Care Centers • Nonprofit Organizations –Child Specialist • Youth/Foster Care • Child Support Enforcement • Youth Agencies • Special Education
Theatre <u>Life Skills</u> -Listening -Speaking -Creative Thinking -Learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Theatre Arts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acting • Computer Animation • Design • Directing • Film • New Media • Television
Movie Making <u>Life Skills</u> -Listening -Speaking -Creative thinking -Foresight	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Film Studies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Film production, editing • Direction, assistant direction • Screenwriting • Cinematography, lighting • Art direction, costume design • Archival work at major studios and museums • Special effects, digital film production.

Camp Topic	Major(s)	Career Opportunities
Golf <i>Life Skills</i> -Listening -Speaking -Foresight -Sociability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Professional Golf Management •Turf Production and Management 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Golf Club Management • Golf Instruction/Education • Golf Events/Facility Management • Biotechnological research on plants • Landscape management • Sod production • Recreational landscape management

Partnerships or collaborations

One of the Big Red Summer Camps' greatest successes is creating new partnerships among 4-H and other faculty across the land-grant university. These collaborative efforts help to strengthen the 4-H program and serve as the catalyst for other endeavors. For example, the College of Fine and Performing Arts (theatre and movie making) is now sponsoring a student intern who is housed at the 4-H camps. In its third year, this resident camp internship has provided the springboard for developing Fine & Performing Arts Camps for elementary students that are being held statewide. These week-long day-camps allow senior students in Fine & Performing Arts to get a feel for working with youth and what it is like to be an artist in a rural community. At the same time, youth in local communities get the opportunity to experience hands-on activities related to fine and performing arts that would ordinarily not be available. Students in the College of Journalism are using 4-H programs as their class projects for developing marketing/media campaigns. Culinary students and faculty are partnering with 4-H to bring a new level of food service to the 4-H food stand at the State Fair.

Program Evaluation

Process

Big Red Summer Camps allow high-school-aged youth to increase their knowledge in a specific area of study, explore career opportunities, increase their self confidence, learn new skills, and have fun in a safe summer camp environment with their peers. During the past three summers, 226 young people from five different states had nearly 7,000 contact hours (6,848) with university faculty who were experts in their select field of study.

Outcomes and Impacts

In order to assess the outcomes of Big Red Summer Camps, end-of-camp evaluations were conducted at each camp. Responses to surveys completed by 100% of the campers (N=226) indicate:

- 82% increased their work readiness skills in their chosen field of study.
- 64% increased their knowledge of the subject matter they studied.
- 48% increased their knowledge of various topics.
- 45% are better prepared for their future.
- 34% increased their self confidence.
- 30% were encouraged to explore UNL as a college choice.
- 7% made the decision to attend UNL.

Quotes from campers reinforce these findings. One camper stated: "I learned so much at the summer camp that my brain was so full that I left my scissors at camp. I am seriously considering attending UNL." Another stated: "I was immersed into an incredible learning opportunity. I made new friends...it was awesome." While data is only available for three years, **Big Red Summer Camps** seem to be influencing students' attendance at UNL as the following chart shows:

Year of Big Red Summer Camp Attendance	Percentage of Campers who are age eligible currently attending UNL
2003	10%
2004	73%
2005	14.3%

Communication to stakeholders

In order to celebrate the success of Big Red Summer Camps, program outcomes are regularly reported (via e-mail, website, and newsletters) to families who have children involved in the camps, faculty who are teaching the program, department administrators of involved faculty, deans and other university administrators. In addition, Big Red Summer Camp data have been shared throughout Extension to help recruit participants for future programs and with the stakeholders who participated in the original 4-H conversations and had identified the need.

Program Sustainability

Big Red Summer Camps are continuing to gain interest from campus faculty and youth. Faculty are excited about the potential of sharing their subject matter expertise with interested youth, and value the support of youth development professionals who can help design age appropriate content. Partnering faculty/departments also appreciate being able to focus on their subject matter expertise instead of the details of a residential environment (marketing, food, lodging, transportation, etc.). It is anticipated that as enrollment of Big Red Summer Camp participants at the University continues to be documented, there will be an increase in departments/colleges wanting to partner in the hosting of camps. The majority of funding for Big Red Summer Camps comes from registration fees; hence, program sustainability is built in. It is anticipated that high quality, educational, fun camps will continue to attract participants.

Replication

While the concept of hosting potential students on college campuses is not new, Big Red Summer Camps lends itself to campus-wide engagement in 4-H programming. Other land-grant universities could benefit from implementing this type of programming, highlighting areas of expertise on their campus. Because student recruitment is a major issue on all campuses, focusing on bringing a group of potential students who have expressed interest in a specific subject matter for in-depth learning is enticing to academic units. In addition, developing a system whereby faculty can spend their time teaching in their area of expertise without

worrying about logistics is helpful in engaging departments that might not otherwise participate.

Rationale and Importance of Program

Big Red Summer Camps offer an intriguing way to teach work readiness skills to youth while sparking interest in higher education. By collaborating across the land-grant system, Big Red Summer Camps provide opportunities for a diverse array of subject matter experts to be involved in the design, implementation and evaluation of 4-H programming. These relationships can serve as the catalyst for new and exciting endeavors. More information about Big Red Camps can be found at: <http://bigredcamps.unl.edu>.

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